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6 August 1965

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DCI BRIEFING OF (STENNIS)
CIA SUBCOMMITTEE OF SENATE
ARMED SERVICES AND APPROPRIATIONS
COMMITTEE

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SENATE CIA SUBCOMMITTEE OF
ARMED SERVICES AND APPROPRIATIONSA. VIETNAM

NORTH VIETNAMESE - SOVIET SAM SITES

I. I would like to begin with the subject of the North Vietnamese SAM sites. There are at present seven known sites.

A. As you know, on 24 July a USAF jet fighter was shot down west of Hanoi by a surface-to-air missile. There is no question about this since the missiles were actually sighted by the pilots

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B. Two days later on 26 July a DRONE aircraft was sent in over the SAM sites and it too was shot down.

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C. Following these events an exhaustive analysis of all available data was undertaken in an effort to determine which of the known SAM sites

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was involved. This analysis continues as additional data becomes available--but as of right now there are three suspect sites. These are the three sites west of Hanoi which I shall term SAM sites 4, 6 and 7 in the order of their detection.

1. You may have heard or read that some of these are dummy sites. I want to make it clear that the sites--that is the actual emplacements--are genuine and can be operated as genuine missile sites if the equipment is installed.
2. We know now that one of the sites--site 6--contained dummy missile equipment as of 28 July when we obtained low-level photo coverage of this site. Prior to this, however, it could have contained genuine equipment. By 5 August, when the site was photographed again, the dummy equipment had been removed.
3. Photography of 29 July--also a low-level mission and one which produced extremely good photography--showed that SAM site 7 was unoccupied but there were indications that it had been occupied by genuine equipment some time prior to this mission. This

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is based on certain tracks and imprints in the ground and certain debris in the area which indicates that real missile equipment had been there.

4. There is one other possibility. That is that the missile which downed our aircraft was fired from an as yet undetected site or a mobile site in an unknown location. This site could have been dismantled and relocated before it could be photographed.
5. Now what does this all mean? It suggests to us that the SAM equipment is being moved from site to site in order to make it more difficult to mount an attack against an operational site. It appears that if we are to succeed in knocking out an operational site it will have to be attack shortly after it is detected and not several days later when it is likely that the equipment will have been removed.

II. Concerning the much-publicized attack on the SAM sites --referred to as SAM sites 6 and 7--other interesting aspects have come to light.

1. We are now almost certain the strike of 27 July did not hit the intended target area. Photography shows no damage to either SAM site 6 or

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7 or to the nearby barracks areas which
were also to be hit in the strike.

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We do not yet know exactly why the

strike did not hit the intended target area
but it must be kept in mind that planes were
coming in low at high speed and a slight de-
viation in course or wind drift could cause
such an error.

3. Six aircraft were lost. Two of these collided
while returning from the mission--one had
been damaged and rammed his wingman. The
other four are believed to have been shot
down by ground fire which was described by
the returning pilots as intense.
4. In any case Communist propaganda--Soviet,
Chinese, and North Vietnamese--made no men-
tion of either the SAM firings against the
US aircraft or the 27 July strike except to

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claim that it was directed against a "heavily populated area."

4. It is quite possible that since it was announced in the press that we hit the SAM sites when in fact we did not that the Communists interpret this as a US ploy to test world reaction before launching an all out attack against the Hanoi SAM complex.

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III. There are other aspects of the events leading up to the 27 July attack which I would like to clarify.

1. The first indication that we had that any of the SAM sites were operational was [redacted]

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[redacted]
the day before the
F4C was shot down. [redacted]

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The pilots of this flight had been briefed on the fact that a SAM site was probably operational in the Hanoi area and were instructed to stay out of the known SAM envelope. However, SAM sites 6 and 7 had not been identified by that time. They were warned while in flight that a [redacted] was active but thinking that they were outside the known SAM envelope did not change course.

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2. Although SAM sites six and seven were photographed for the first time on 20 July (four days before this incident) in a high altitude photographic mission, these sites were not detected in the field readout and it was only on 25 July, after the photography had reached our center in Washington that the sites were reported. The 20 July photography showed these sites to be still under construction at that time.

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[redacted]

3. Since both the F4C and the DRONE two days later were downed in the vicinity of the new SAM sites--6 and 7--a preliminary assessment was made that SAM sites 6 and/or 7 may have fired the missile. This was reported by us on 25 July. There was no firm evidence, however, in either photography or intercepted material which SAM site fired the missile. As indicated earlier, it is still not clear, despite an exhaustive and continuing analysis.
4. In any case, the strike was planned on the basis of a preliminary assessment that sites 6 and/or 7 were the culprits. This assessment was based primarily on the location of the downed aircraft and their proximity to the two new sites. [redacted]

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[redacted] indicated that an operational SA-2 site was located somewhere in the general area northwest of Hanoi. CIA did not participate in the planning of this strike.

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NORTH VIETNAM - OTHER DEVELOPMENTS

II. There has been other evidence of continuing Soviet aid in the build-up of North Vietnam's defense.

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B. Our aircraft have shot down five MIGs. Two were shot down on 17 June by two US jet fighters using Sparrow air-to-air missiles. On 20 June two MIGs jumped two US piston-engine attack planes but the US planes shot down one of the MIGs with automatic weapons fire. On 10 July two more MIGs were shot down by USAF planes using Sidewinder air-to-air missiles.

C. We have been hitting targets in northwest North Vietnam which include major barracks areas at Son La, Dien Bien Phu and various ammunition dumps. One of the rail lines running northwest and from Hanoi to China has also been cut.

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**DCI BRIEFING OF
STENNIS SUBCOMMITTEE**

VIETNAM - ROLE OF COMMUNIST CHINA

III. All evidence indicates that Communist China is encouraging Hanoi and the Viet Cong to keep the pressure on and to reject any settlement in Vietnam short of a complete Communist victory.

Peiping's response to President Johnson's press conference statements on 28 July was a defiant propaganda blast apparently calculated, in part, to bolster the morale of any in the Communist camp whose morale was shaken by the announcement of stepped-up US military efforts.

A. All recent efforts to promote talks leading to a peaceful settlement have been contemptuously rejected by the Chinese. Peiping called Wilson's Commonwealth Mission proposal last month the scheme of a "nitwit" which was part of the "US peace talks swindle."

1. Since then the Chinese have again publicly reiterated their position that there is no possibility of a UN role in solving the Vietnam problem.

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3.

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B. Peiping's recent actions suggest that the Chinese believe this hard line has increased the chances of a US escalation which might lead to Chinese involvement in the war. However, the Chinese appear determined to continue this policy. Peiping has kept up its efforts to deter the US by warnings over the possible consequences.

1. While not increasing Peiping's present conditional commitment to send men "if needed," recent Chinese propaganda statements appear designed to give the impression that China has moved closer to direct military involvement in Vietnam.
2. Peiping has at the same time been putting out the word through a variety of channels that although the Chinese do not want war with the US, they are prepared for it if necessary, and will intervene directly as they did in Korea if the US bombs China, or if a collapse of the DRV appears imminent.

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2. On 20 July an official broadcast from Peiping restated the Chinese position that there would be "no point" in talks so long as US troops were in Vietnam.
 3. Both in their propaganda and in private statements by top leaders the Chinese have been expressing arrogant confidence in eventual victory over the US in the event of a larger war involving an attack on China. Chou En-lai has even claimed that Peiping would prefer to have the Soviet Union stand clear in such a case.
- C. The Chinese warnings have been accompanied by increased civil defense preparations, which probably reflect genuine fears that the warnings may have no effect.
1. The authorities in South China appear to be deliberately fanning fears that China will become directly involved in the Vietnam war, apparently to stimulate greater compliance with civil defense and other related policies.

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2. According to letters from residents of China to relatives abroad, many persons living in cities in South China are preparing to evacuate dependents, and some have actually moved.

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4. Militia training has been intensified since May.

D. At the same time the Chinese are stepping up preparations to meet possible US attacks against China itself or against targets in the DRV close to the Chinese frontier.

1. The jet fighter base at Ningming, under construction since last fall, has been completed and at least 14 MIGs were apparently moved into it on 14 July.

2. A new air base is nearing completion on Hainan Island. Construction of another field near the DRV border in China has just started and is proceeding at a rapid pace.

3. The Chinese Navy has apparently augmented its South Sea fleet by bringing in a

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number of Shanghai-class fast patrol boats. Four were discovered at the Hainan Island port of Haikou on 20 July and three others were sighted in the Canton area on the same day. Previously only one Shanghai-class boat had been observed in the area. However, there are still no major surface vessels located in the South Sea Fleet area.

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IV. For the past four weeks, there has been a lull in large-scale Viet Cong activity in South Vietnam.

A. Last week, only one major Viet Cong attack occurred--an estimated battalion-size assault on a government paramilitary training camp near the Cambodian border in Kien Phong Province, about 75 miles South of Saigon along the Mekong.

B. There are some signs, however, that the Viet Cong Main Forces are merely in another regrouping period prior to a new phase of their summer offensive.

1. Various troop sightings have indicated large forces, estimated at possibly three Viet Cong regiments, south of Da Nang Air Base and within a 25-mile radius of

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the new air base at Chu Lai; a force of possibly regimental strength appears to be in the vicinity of the Phu Bai installation, near Hué, according to communication analysis.

2. There are also indications of a Viet Cong concentration along the border of Hau Nghai and Long An provinces, only about 20 miles west of Saigon, as well as farther south in the delta where larger units have been relatively inactive since early this year.
 - a. Possibly presaging some action in the delta is increased harassment in recent days along Route 4, the main road into the delta, and along the road leading due south of Saigon toward the sea.
 - b. Moreover, in the past few days, there have been a series of small-scale attacks and harassing fire against towns and outposts near this artery in Gia Dinh and Long An provinces, within a close radius of Saigon.

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V. Thus despite the generally small-scale character of recent Viet Cong actions, the Communists are maintaining heavy pressures in the form of widespread terrorism, harassment, road minings, and sabotage, along their more normal patterns of activity.

A. The coastal railroad is currently operable only along a 100-mile stretch of the south-central provinces and from Da Nang in the north almost to the border of northernmost Quang Tri Province.

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B. Most of the roads leading northwest, north, northeast and east of Saigon are partially cut or totally interdicted.

1. Perhaps the largest government operation of the war was recently conducted along eastwest Route 19, connecting the town of Pleiku in the highlands, and the headquarters of the government's II Corps military area, with its supply port of Qui Nhon on the coast.

a. Route 19 was reopened to military convoys on 18 July for the first time since the end of May; the combined US - South Vietnamese operation involved 12 Vietnamese battalions, a massive US airlift of troops, extension of one airfield, air strikes around a strategic pass on Route 19 by Guam-based US B-52 jet bombers, and constant air support for the convoys which delivered some 2,700 tons of supplies between 18 and 23 July.

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b. However, with the gradual withdrawal of government battalions from the area, Route 19 is again proving vulnerable to at least temporary interdiction through bridge sabotage and mining.

B. The temporary opening of Route 19, however, brought a needed morale boost to the isolated troops and the population in the highlands.

C. Some deterioration of government morale--alleged by one government official to be near an all-time low among troops--has followed the Viet Cong assaults since May.

1. An embassy reporter, for example, has reported serious deterioration of both morale and security in the northern coastal province of Quang Ngai where, as a result of two major Viet Cong assaults against a government headquarters about ten miles west of the province capital, the government now holds only key towns and isolated outposts.

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VI. The US Military Command in Saigon has recently revised its estimate of confirmed Viet Cong regular combat strength to 53,000. This brings total main force strength, including combat support elements, to 70,600; counting the irregulars, the Viet Cong have more than 162,000 under arms.

A. Now included in the Viet Cong OB is one confirmed regiment of the North Vietnamese 325th Division--the 101st Regiment with three battalions, in Kontum Province.

1. Two other regiments of the 325th North Vietnamese Division are also believed to be in South Vietnam, but are not yet confirmed.

B. Confirmed infiltration during 1965 now includes only the 1,200 men of the 101st Regiment, but MACV has some evidence that the total may be from 5,600 to 8,000 infiltrators.

VII. Against the Viet Cong force, South Vietnam now has 267,836 men in its regular armed forces, plus another 259,300 in the two principal paramilitary ground forces, for a total strength of 527,136.

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- A. This is an over-all growth of about 146,000 since a year ago, even though the planned creation of several new regular army units has been shelved in order to fill under-strength units.
- B. The number of combat ineffective government battalions has now been reduced to 15 (one regiment and 13 battalions) out of a total 164, compared with five regiments and nine battalions so rated at the beginning of July.
- C. US troop strength in South Vietnam now totals 80,000; about 30,000 are combat troops, but official statistics are no longer breaking down US strength except by service.

VIII. In the past few days, there have been new signs of restiveness in the political situation in South Vietnam, including rumors of Premier Ky's imminent resignation or ouster.

- A. Although we are aware of undercurrents of friction and carping, we have no real evidence of any really serious plot afoot.
 - 1. There is evident dissatisfaction on the part of powerful Buddhist elements

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which may bode future trouble, furthermore, there are signs that various well-placed individuals or cliques within the ruling hierarchy are merely bidding their time with a view to eventually assuming power.

B. Ky, however, and several other top officials, plan to be out of the country on a visit to Taiwan and Thailand in mid-August, leaving the field open to maneuvering in Ky's absence.

1. Additionally, there has been some indication that Ky may try to discuss a mutual aid pact with other anti-Communist Asian states, a possibility the US is trying to deter if the idea is for military co-operation.

C. Recent emphasis by Saigon's military leaders on their rejection of the 1954 Geneva Accords and on the goal of liberating North Vietnam is aimed largely at a domestic audience, but entails some potential embarrassment for the US.

IX. Saigon's new military rulers are making strenuous efforts to gear up military mobilization, reduce

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desertion rates, and crack down on speculators and troublemakers.

- A. The new government of Premier Ky has had some success, through threats and price manipulation, in moving some rice stocks from the delta to Saigon, though the US Embassy believes further imports from abroad will be needed to ensure consumption requirements through 1965.
- B. However, the government is clearly finding that progress is slow, and Ky is showing some signs of irritation over the obstacles from entrenched politicos and profiteers.

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